

September 22, 2005

James P. Mayer, Executive Director  
Little Hoover Commission  
925 L Street, Suite 805  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Mayer:

SUBJECT: CALFED Bay-Delta Authority Review

The Delta Protection Commission (Commission) has been following the subject review process underway by the Little Hoover Commission (LHC), and several individual Commissioners have completed surveys to provide input from a Delta stakeholder perspective. The following information about the Commission is provided in follow-up to recent conversations with Kate Martin of your staff, as it is essential that there is an understanding of the role of the Commission in the Delta relative to the CALFED review process.

The Commission represents diverse stakeholders and interests involved in the Delta. Its nineteen members are landowners from the North, South, West, and Central Delta Reclamation Districts; Supervisors from the counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo; Council Members/Mayors from the cities of Antioch, Lodi, and West Sacramento; and high-level leaders from the State Departments of Fish and Game, Parks and Recreation, Boating and Waterways, Water Resources, Food and Agriculture, and the State Lands Commission. Ex-officio members of the Commission are Senator Mike Machado and Assemblymember Lois Wolk.

The Commission came into existence under the Delta Protection Act (Act) in 1992 in recognition of the increasing threats to the unique and fragile resources of the Delta Primary Zone from potential urban and suburban encroachment having the potential to impact agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreation uses. In 1995 a Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone was adopted pursuant to the Act. Updated in 2002, the Plan sets out findings, policies, and recommendations resulting from background studies in the areas of environment, utilities and infrastructure, land use, agriculture, water, recreation and access, levees, and marine patrol/boater education/safety programs. Activities in the Secondary Zone are also monitored to assure the values of the Primary Zone are not compromised.

Although the Management Plan is a significant accomplishment, it is recognized that the Delta is facing increasing pressures having the potential for impacting and even depleting its irreplaceable resources. With CALFED providing the scientific studies to determine the state of the Delta, the Commission is in a position to proactively provide a forum for discussion and to respond to the challenge of practically addressing policy driven influences. The Act mandates that Cities and Counties amend their general plans to cause them to be consistent with the Management Plan, and amendments to that Plan. As a result, actions of Boards and Councils concerning land in the Primary Zone of the Delta should be in harmony with the Commission's Plan. The Commission serves as an Appeal body in the event the actions of a local entity on a project located within the Primary Zone are challenged as being inconsistent with the Act or the Management Plan.

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The areas of interest to the Commission (in the Delta) are relatively broad in contrast to the CALFED Program. Because the Commission fosters acknowledgement that the Delta system is a living environment requiring adaptive management practices, it provides an effective arena for local and regional stakeholder discussions regarding practical management of Delta resources. Recently, action was taken to give priority to an intensely facilitated visioning process in which the role and mission of the Commission will be reviewed; commitment renewed; and a plan of action for near-term and long-term sustainability and viability, including funding, can be developed and implemented. Such commitment demonstrates that the Commission takes its role as a forum for representation on Delta issues and its responsibility to pull together efforts for preservation and protection of Delta resources seriously and responsibly.

An anticipated outcome of the visioning process will be the creation of a document repository. It is the intent of the facilitator of the process to pull together all documents relative to the Delta and to then provide a summary of areas of similarity or contrast with the Commission's Management Plan. The document research will include Delta City and County General Plans, the State Water Plan, and the Record of Decision governing the CALFED program. It is likely that the review will conclude with recommendations for amending the Management Plan in acknowledgement of the ever-evolving nature of issues influencing the Delta.

Also, worth noting is that the Commission recently formed a Strategic Support Team. Comprised of staff members from many of the entities represented on the Commission, this Team will provide expertise and support to the Commission and staff in areas that include grants, legislation, and public affairs. The Team will be developing an action plan for establishing a prioritized process for accomplishing the recommendations set out in the Management Plan.

In summary, your efforts to provide opportunities for stakeholder input into your review process are appreciated, and your consideration of this information provided herein is encouraged. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 375-6441 or Linda Fiack, Executive Director, at (916) 776-2292 if additional information is needed regarding the Commission or issues facing the Delta. For your reference, a copy of the Management Plan, as well as the working draft of the *Delta Recreation Master Strategy: Aquatic Resources Focus*, recently prepared by the Commission, have been provided to Kate Martin.

Sincerely,

Mike McGowan  
Chair

cc: Senator Mike Machado  
Assemblymember Lois Wolk  
Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources  
Joe Grindstaff, Director, CALFED  
Susan Ramos, Assistant Regional Director, BOR  
Linda Fiack, Executive Director